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Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01
IO-06 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 EUR-08 DHA-02 /051 W
----------150835Z 044768 /11
R 150720Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5731
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0221

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, RH, SF
SUBJ: RHODESIA: PRIVATE RHODESIANS APPROACH
EMBASSY ON SETTLEMENT

1. SUMMARY: TWO RHODESIAN LAWYERS--ONE BLACK AND ONE WHITE--HAVE APPROACHED EMBASSY PRETORIA WITH THEIR IDEAS FOR RESOLVING THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM. BASIS WOULD BE EXCLUSION OF SMITH, MUGABE AND SITHOLE FROM GOVERNMENT AND SELECTIVE REPRESENTATION OF ACCEPTABLE GROUPS IN EACH MINISTRY WITH ALL GROUPS REPRESENTED IN "SENSITIVE" MINISTRIES. THEY SEEK USG SUPPORT FOR THEIR PLAN. PRINCIPAL INTEREST OF THEIR APPROACH IS THAT IT IS SYMPTOMATIC OF GROWING CONCERN IN RHODESIA. SUGGESTED RESPONSE WOULD BE POLITE TURNDOWN. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY PRETORIA REPORTS THAT OVER WEEKEND OF FEB 5, TWO RHODESIANS APPROACHED EMBASSY OFFICER WITH PROPOSAL FOR INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. ONE IS CHARLES LAZARUS, BULAWAYO LAWYER REPORTEDLY LONG INVOLVED WITH BLACK CAUSE IN RHODESIA; THE OTHER WASHINGTON SENTOLE, SALISBURY LAWYER WHO CLAIMED LONG PERSONAL ASSOCIATION WITH JOSHUA NKOMO.

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EM CRUX OF APPROACH WAS THAT MOST RHODESIANS, BLACK OR WHITE, DID NOT WANT A SWING TO MARXIST-BASED GOVERNMENT. SMITH WAS SLOWLY FORCING RHODESIA IN THIS DIRECTION. SETTLEMENT OF PROBLEM HAD TO BE INTERNAL AND MUST PROMISE ULTIMATE EXCLUSION OF SMITH. PERSONS ON OTHER EXTREME, LIKE MUGABE AND SITHOLE, ALSO MIGHT BE EXCLUDED, MOSTLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO FUNCTIONING

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POLITICAL MACHINERY. NKOMO, THEY FELT, WAS NOT EXTREMIST
THAT HE APPEARS IN PRESS AND WAS WILLING TO ENTER
INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS. LAZARUS AND SENTOLE PRESENTED
EMBOFF WITH DIAGRAM OF PROPOSED INTERIM GOVERNMENT. MAIN
FEATURE WAS SELECTIVE REPRESENTATION OF VARIOUS FACTIONS
ON EACH MINISTRY WITH "SENSITIVE" MINISTRIES BEING RUN
BY COMMITTEES MADE OF ALL GROUPS. GROUPS TO BE INCLUDED
ARE RHODESIAN FRONT, RHODESIAN PARTY, CENTER PARTY, NKOMO
(OR PATROTIC FRONT) AND MUZOREWA. INTERIM GOVERNMENT
WOULD BE PRESENTED WITH DATE OF ELECTION AND CONSTITUTION
FOR ELECTED GOVERNMENT. IT WOULD NOT DRAFT PERMANENT
CONSTITUTION ITSELF. CONSTITUTION WOULD BIND
ALL PARTIES AND COULD NOT BE DEVIATED FROM. THERE
WOULD BE "TITULAR" BRITISH PRESENCE IN ORDER TO CONVENE
MINISTERIAL COMMITTEES BUT IT WOULD HAVE NO CONSTITUTIONAL
POWER.

4. KEY TO PROPOSAL WAS REQUIREMENT THAT WEST, AND US
IN PARTICULAR, MUST PRESSURE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS,
SOUTH AFRICA AND SMITH TO ACCEPT THIS OUTLINE. SMITH
MUST BE CONVINCED TO LEAVE POLITICAL SCENE. SENTOLE AND
LAZARUS CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD SPOKEN WITH MUZEREWA
OFFICIALS (ALTHOUGH NOT THE BISHOP HIMSELF), NKOMO,
CENTER PARTY, RHODESIAN PARTY, AND NATIONAL UNIFYING FRONT
LEADERS AND TO MEMBERS OF RHODESIAN FRONT. SUPPORT, THEY SAID,
WAS OVERWHELMEING. THEY FEEL THEY MEET CENTRAL ISSUE OF
PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD BY BLACKS AT GENEVA THAT INTERIM
CONSTITUTION MUST HAVE "IRREVERSIBLE MECHANISM" TO
MAJORITY RULE WITHIN SET TIME FRAME. THEY BELIEVE REMOVEAL
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OF SMITH IS POSSIBLE. THEY STATED THAT A SENIOR CABINET
MINISTER HAD INFORMED THEM THAT RF ITSELF WAS LOOKING
FOR NEW INITIATIVE THAT THEY COULD FIND ACCEPTABLE, AND
THAT SMITH WAS VULNERABLE.

5. LAZARUS AND SENTOLE LEFT COPY OF PROPOSAL WITH EMBOFF
AND SAID THEY COULD PRESENT IT IN GREATER DETAIL. THEY
STATED THAT IT HAD BEEN PASSED TO SAG ALSO.

6. PRETORIA COMMENT: LAZARUS AND SENTOLE SEEMED TO
EXPECT THAT SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE ENFORCED FROM OUTSIDE,
WITH CONSTITUTION AND MAKE-UP OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT
PRESENTED TO FACTIONS AS FAIT ACCOMPLI. THERE IS
LITTLE WAY AT PRESENT OF ASSESSING DEPTH OF SUPPORT
THEY CLAIM. EMBOFF INFORMED THEM THAT THEIR DISCUSSIONS
WOULD BE PASSED ON TO AMBASSADOR AND PROMISED NOTHING
FURTHER. IN FOLLOW-UP TO FOREGOING, LAZARUS AND SENTOLE
SENT WORD THROUGH INTERMEDIARY THAT THE SENIOR RHODESIAN
FRONT OFFICIAL OF WHOM THEY HAD SPOKEN WOULD LIKE TO

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MEET WITH EMBASSY TO ISCUSS PROPOSED INTERIM SETTLEMENT,
OR AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION WITHOUT SMITH. WE SAID WE
WOULD RELAY THE REQUEST AND SEEK RESPONSE.
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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01
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----------150834Z 044827 /11
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5732
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0221

LIMDIS

7. CAPE TOWN COMMENT: THE LAZARUS-SENTOLE APPROACH IS OF
INTEREST PRIMARILY BECAUSE IT IS SYMPTOMATIC OF GROWING
CONCERN AMONG WHITES IN RHODESIA, AND POSSIBLY AMONG CERTAIN
MODERATE BLACKS, WHO FEEL THREATENED BY ROLE OF NATIONALISTS
IN GOVERMENT. UNLESS DEPARTMENT PREFERS WE TAKE DIFFERENT
STANCE, I PROPOSE TO HAVE PRETORIA ORALLY REPLY TO LAZARUS
AND SENTOLE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A) WE APPRECIATE THEIR COMING TO THE EMBASSY TO
PRESENT THEIR VIEWS.

B) RHODESIAN SITUATION IS MATTER ON WHICH THE BRITISH
HAVE ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR BRINGING THE PARTIES
TOGETHER TO WORK OUT A SETTLEMENT. THEY MAY WISH TO
PRESENT THEIR IDEAS TO THE BRITISH IF THEY HAVE NOT
ALREADY DONE SO.

C) WE REMAIN DEDICATED TO A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION
OF THE RHODESIAN ISSUE LEADING TO MAJORITY RULE. WE ARE
CONFERRING WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AND ARE CONTINUING
TO CONSULT WITH THE AFRICAN LEADERS MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED
WITH THIS PROBLEM, AS WELL AS THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT.
THE BRITISH PROPOSAL REMAINS, IN OUR VIEW, VALID BASIS
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FOR NEGOTIATIONS.
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